T.J. Masters

AP Literature and Composition

Portfolio Reflections

Othello Letter Reflection

Reading and comprehending Shakespeare, much like poetry, is one of my biggest setbacks in English. Even though eventually my brain will fall into the Shakespearean dialect, I feel that it takes me longer than it does for my peers. I oftentimes rely on the help of translated copies of the plays so that I can fully comprehend everything that is going on in the text. “Othello” was really no exception. With this tragedy, I wasn’t able to wrap my brain around the text until the fifth act or so. Eventually I did, and I feel that it has worked its way up to my favorite Shakespeare piece that I have read—though, to be fair, its only competition was “Hamlet” and “Romeo & Juliet”.

For this assignment, we were to assume the role of a character from “Othello” to excuse them for their actions. I decided to do Rodrigo, because I feel that he was the most pathetic character in literary history, and his actions would thus be the easiest to excuse. I decided that Iago’s deception and the fact that his love for Desdemona rendered his thought pattern illogical were good excuses for the (attempted) murder of a man—I would buy that, at least. The writing process for this assignment was among the lengthiest I have experienced for any paper. For some reason, I was suffering from the biggest case of writer’s block. I went through a good chunk of my iTunes library to finish this. Also, I may have burned hole in my retinas for how long I stared at a blank document on my computer screen. Eventually I overcame my crippling writer’s block and produced a product that I felt to be far below acceptable. Because of the fact that I was writing about Shakespeare, something I made abundantly clear I cannot comprehend, and that I was trying to finish this quickly so that I could fall asleep before the sun wakes up, my confidence in my work rapidly fell to zero.

Because I felt that I completely misunderstood the prompt, I decided to use my free time before class the next day to take a much needed revision period. After another bout of writer’s block cleared, I felt in a better place. This assignment was difficult, to say that least. Not only am I completely unoriginal in school excuses—being the son of a doctor has its perks—but this one was far lengthier than any excuse ever turned into Mrs. Marter. Despite the huge roadblocks I faced with this assignment, I feel that I turned out a quality product.